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ABSTRACT

In order to maintain and improve its residents' standard of living, Colorado must develop an internationally competitive work force for the 21st century. To achieve this goal, a fully integrated, improved, and updated work force development system must be established. This system will require an ongoing partnership among business and industry, labor, government, and education. Recommendations for achieving these goals include the following: (1) develop an information and job exchange network with multiple access points; (2) direct resources designated for subsidized services so that funds follow the individual, not the program; (3) create a network of one-stop career centers; (4) consolidate state programs that provide training and employment services and tie them to economic development; and (5) assist in the creation of regional work force development boards to oversee employment and training programs in designated geographical areas. The present nine distinct programs should be merged into one dynamic and integrated system. The changes needed to develop a coordinated service delivery model to achieve the systemic changes envisioned for Colorado are in the areas of information, assessment, training, placement, and follow-up and evaluation. The new system should be market driven, efficient, flexible, accessible, performance-based, aligned with the economic development needs of the state, and a catalyst to encourage lifelong learning for all Coloradans. (The recommendation statement includes two appendixes that provide information on apprenticeships and employment by industry, and a list of workforce development programs authorized by federal statute, the number served, and the funding. The document contains 16 references.) (KC)

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STATE OF COLORADO

CREATING COLORADO'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century

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STATE OF COLORADO

CREATING COLORADO'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century

July 1995

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July 1, 1995

Governor Romer and Members of the Colorado Legislature

We are pleased to submit our report, "Creating Colorado's Workforce Development System Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century." We believe that this report outlines an innovative plan to improve the delivery of employment and training services in Colorado.

The Council has met since August 1994 to design a more efficient workforce development system as directed by Executive Order and H.B. 1191. During this time, Council members conducted extensive research and met with key stakeholders in the system, including employers, state and local government, labor, and educators. Through this research, we have concluded that for Colorado to sustain its vibrant economy and become a leader in the emerging global marketplace, we must create a dynamic employment and training system that can respond more effectively to the rapidly changing needs of the economy.

To accomplish this, the Council believes that we must transform our current array of programs into a coordinated, accessible system which will deliver a world class workforce. The implementation of our recommendations will require strong support from the executive and legislative branches, as well as the business community. It will take the collective will of all stakeholders in Colorado's future to make this plan a reality.

We urge your careful consideration of this report and our recommendations.

Sincerely,

The Colorado Workforce Coordinating Council

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vision Statement

Colorado will develop an internationally competitive workforce for the twenty-first century.

To achieve this goal, a fully integrated, improved, and updated workforce development system must be established.

This system will require an ongoing partnership among business and industry, labor, government, and education.

We must radically change the way we deliver employment and training services in Colorado. Economic and social realities dictate this change. Although the world of work has evolved, the fragmented, overly prescriptive federal programs have not kept pace with this evolution. Moreover, federal budgets have been decreasing, forcing programs to serve fewer clients as more Coloradans need services.

The Challenge

Colorado's most urgent human investment needs range from those of displaced high-technology workers to welfare recipients to unskilled, low-wage workers. Yet, all we have is a patchwork of programs assisting target populations. Furthermore, few programs address the needs of the average worker who has neither received welfare nor been displaced from his/her job, yet who must learn new skills to remain employed. Likewise, few programs specifically assist employers who must retrain their workers to remain competitive. In essence, we have failed to create a *system* to provide accessible employment and training services to everyone.

Building an employment and training system based on broad partnerships among industry, labor, non-profits, education, and the government is the key to Colorado's solution.

The challenge is to convert the employment and training programs into a coordinated system which will provide current and future workforces with the means to improve, update, and refine their skills. Conventional education, training, and economic development policies cannot meet the

Mission Statement

Formulate a workforce development system that provides coordinated, accessible, and quality training, retraining, educational, and employment services.

The strategy will help secure and maintain meaningful employment for Colorado workers, will provide a highly skilled workforce for Colorado employers, and will ensure continued economic viability for the state.

challenge because they are outdated solutions to old problems. We must design a new solution which will meet the needs of Colorado's citizens and employers today, yet be flexible enough to move the state into the twenty-first century.

Recognizing this challenge, Governor Romer created the Colorado Workforce Coordinating Council in March 1994. Through the Governor's executive order and H.B. 1191, signed into law in June 1994, the Council has been directed to devise a workforce development system to ensure that Colorado maintains its competitive edge and becomes a global leader.

The World of Work is Changing

Some may question the need for a new system. According to many economic indicators, Colorado is thriving. For example, unemployment remains under 4 percent and 79,000 new jobs have been created in the past year. For the third straight year, Colorado has been ranked the number one state in the nation for business.[1] The state is currently enjoying a robust economy, and many individuals and employers are savoring the fruits of economic expansion. However, amidst this boom, there is evidence of distress. Other statistics, including the dramatic increase in the numbers of permanently laid-off workers, the skyrocketing increase in the ranks of temporary employees, and the widening wage gap between skilled and unskilled workers, confirm that change is necessary.

In Colorado there are pockets of high unemployment in some prospering areas, and some regions of the state are suffering severe economic distress with per capita incomes in the bottom fifth of the nation.[2] Following a national trend, Colorado's highly educated and skilled residents are becoming wealthier while the unskilled are becoming poorer. A recent study by The Colorado Trust finds that by the late 1980s, Colorado ranked 41st in the country in income distribution.[3] Simply stated, Colorado will not retain its economic vitality if such disparities increase.

No longer can we rely on general economic expansion, as we did in the post-World War II era, to create jobs and boost incomes. For example, between 1950 and 1978, every segment of society enjoyed increasing incomes, including the bottom 20 percent of workers, whose incomes grew by 138 percent. However,

between 1979 and 1993, the top 20 percent of workers dramatically increased their earnings while the bottom 20 percent's incomes declined by 20 percent. U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich explains, "[this gap] directly correlates with education and training, because of the great wave of technology that has engulfed the modern workplace."[4] Because of these workplace changes, workers are being displaced from their jobs at a rate 50 percent higher than in the mid-1970s.[5]

Workplaces no longer follow the Frederick Winston Taylor model whereby complex jobs are broken into a myriad of small tasks which can be performed by an assembly-line of unskilled workers. As Secretary Reich and others have noted, training is essential because the jobs of the future demand high skills. Currently, skilled workers earn approximately 40 percent[6] more than workers with no training. However, even skilled workers are becoming victims of downsizing as traditional job descriptions are discarded, and companies purchase better equipment to replace workers and increase productivity.[7] The best insurance workers have to remain employed is to maintain up-to-date skills through life-long learning and retraining.

Skilled workers earn approximately 40 percent more . . . than workers with no training.

We Must Change

The evidence indicates that Colorado must design a more efficient system to aid more individuals and employers as workplaces and technology continue to evolve. In our planning, we must take into account the dramatic potential for how jobs will change. We must build an employment and training system which produces highly skilled workers to succeed in demand occupations. It must consider employers' needs and allow workers and job seekers to enter and re-enter the system for education and skills upgrades, as the economy demands.

However, government alone is not the answer. Resources dedicated to employment and training are being substantially reduced at the federal level, and the state cannot make up the difference. Yet, while we acknowledge that we must do much more with less, we also strongly believe that the composition and delivery of our employment and training programs must change. Therefore, building a system based on broad partnerships among industry, labor, non-profits, education, and government is the key to Colorado's solution.

A New Approach

Responding to the challenge from Governor Romer and the Legislature to design a more efficient workforce development system for Colorado, the 21-member Workforce Coordinating Council–represented by business, labor, education, community-based organizations, and state and local government–has designed a blueprint for change. Council members met over a period of ten months and discussed a broad array of workplace issues, including many employees' poor work ethics, the public school system's shortcomings, the lack of health care, child care, transportation, and other problems faced by families and employers.

The Council believes that . . . services must be coordinated into a flexible, market-driven system, which encourages lifelong learning investments.

Whereas these issues affect the quality of the workforce, the Council realized that it could not address the spectrum of social issues before designing a workforce development system for Colorado. Because there is much that can be done to improve and coordinate the delivery of employment and training services today, the Council primarily focused its efforts on creating a system to ensure Colorado's economic competitiveness now and into the future. However, Council members did review and approve the state's draft School-To-Work Transition Plan which it believes, when added to standards-based education reform efforts such as HB 93-1313, will move the public education system in the right direction.

The following chapters of this report, "Creating Colorado's Workforce Development System: Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century," explain how the Council recommends we create the most efficient employment and training system. The Council believes that essential elements of the system (information, assessment, training, placement, follow-up and evaluation) and the 50+ different programs which deliver these services must be coordinated into a flexible, market-driven system which encourages lifelong learning investments. The system must deliver quality information and training programs to individuals seeking employment or skills upgrades, and to employers seeking skilled employees. More importantly, it must be accessible to *everyone*: employers, skilled and unskilled workers, disadvantaged and dislocated workers, students, the unemployed, and workers wanting skills upgrades or a new job.

In the following chapters, the Council has outlined its recommendations for the systemic changes necessary to create the new system. The Council has chosen to focus on developing a blueprint for systemic change, understanding that the governance structure necessary for success must be addressed in the future. We encourage full consideration of the ideas and implementation strategies. Despite the anticipated changes at the federal level, including any of the block grant scenarios currently being discussed in Congress, the Council is committed to these recommendations to re-engineer the entire service delivery system.

Colorado's Future ~
Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century

Colorado needs a workforce development system which provides employers and job seekers greater access to higher quality information and services. It must maximize customer choice, increase accountability, and use resources more efficiently. Transforming the current programs into such a system will require the implementation of the following recommendations.

- ***Recommendation 1***
  Develop an information and job exchange network with multiple access points.

- ***Recommendation 2***
  Direct resources designated for subsidized services so that funds follow the individual, not the program.

- ***Recommendation 3***
  Create a network of one-stop career centers.

- ***Recommendation 4***
  Consolidate state programs that provide training and employment services and tie them to economic development.

- ***Recommendation 5***
  Assist in the creation of regional workforce development boards to oversee employment and training programs in designated geographical areas.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

❖ *Recommendation 1* ❖

Develop an information and job exchange network with multiple access points

Recognizing that not everyone has a personal computer, the system would be available at a variety of locations . . .

Colorado must create a state-of-the-art electronic information and job-match system accessible to every employer and job seeker. This new network will consolidate the fragmented array of information systems and databases into an interconnected, user-friendly system. It will allow job seekers to electronically search for employment and training information, apply for job openings, or file their resumes in a central database, all without having to go through an agency representative.

Employers will also be able to bypass state agency employees to fill vacancies. They will be able to enter information about job openings (e.g., qualifications, salary, benefits) and search the database for qualified applicants using their own hiring criteria. A system this comprehensive is not presently available. Recognizing that not everyone has a personal computer, the system will be available at a variety of locations, including public libraries, community-based organizations, high schools, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and one-stop career centers. For individuals who are not computer literate, who prefer to have help using the system, or who may not even know what information they need, professional advisors will be available. In fact, this user-friendly system will free up the advisors to spend more time with those who need assistance.

In addition to job-matching, access to basic employment information will be improved. For example, labor market information, which is now generally available only at libraries or from the Department of Labor and Employment, will be at the fingertips of business people, economic development planners, and school and vocational counselors.

The network will include a comprehensive database of information about assessment, training, and job placement service providers to help customers make informed decisions. This database will include information about public, private, and non-profit providers. The information will also include qualitative and quantitative data about the provider, such as placement rates, cost of services, and the average wage paid to successful job seekers. This system will have the capacity to connect to other information services via the Internet, and to be constantly updated to state-of-the art technology.

The Key:

A higher quality and greater quantity of information will be widely available to a larger number of individuals and employers.

Implementation Strategy:

August 1, 1995: Governor directs appropriate state agencies through executive order to work with relevant local and private entities to design and develop a budget for the information and job exchange network.

January 1, 1996: Preliminary cost report to Governor by appropriate agencies.

July 1, 1996: Information and job exchange network becomes operational.

❖ *Recommendation 2* ❖

Direct resources designated for subsidized services so that funds follow the individual, not the program

Colorado must create a plan whereby individuals who qualify for subsidized services, as determined by applicable laws and regulations, can assume greater responsibility for making good choices in their employment decisions. They must be given the same opportunities, within established financial parameters, to choose from a broad range of service providers as those who pay for their own services. To accomplish this, the financial support must follow the individual, rather than be allocated to the entities providing the services. Once individuals qualify for the support through the one-stop career center network, they will be assigned an advisor who will guide them through their job search. Individuals could choose to consolidate all the financial support for which they are eligible, and spend it on any service or combination of services, including assessment, vocational counseling, training, and job placement. Strict standards will guide accreditation of public, private, and non-profit providers.

. . . the demand for services is greater than available funding.

The Key:

Maximizing informed decision-making at the individual level for those who receive subsidized services.

Implementation Strategy:

October 1, 1995: Governor directs appropriate state agencies through executive order to work with appropriate local government and private entities to implement a financial support plan that directs resources to individuals.

March 1, 1996: State agencies report to the Governor on implementation process and timeline for phase-in.

July 1, 1997: State begins phase-in.

July 1, 1998: Financial support is available to qualified individuals statewide.

❖ *Recommendation 3* ❖

Create a network of one-stop career centers

One-Stop Career Centers Network will provide:

- a common applicant intake form;
- general labor market information;
- accreditation and evaluation processes for service providers;
- eligibility standards for services for targeted groups;
- advisors;
- management of financial support;
- performance-based outcomes; and
- an evaluation process.

Colorado must develop a network of one-stop career centers that provides access to the information and job exchange network and offers high quality basic and optional services to every Colorado job seeker and employer. Due to the current divisions among programs, individuals often do not know where to begin their search for information and programs. These centers will combine or coordinate current programs and services to reduce overhead and duplication of services. Each center will reflect the economic development needs of the community, closely aligning the programs offered with real needs. One-stop career centers will serve as the primary access points for individuals who qualify for financial support. Once qualified, individuals will be assigned an advisor to support them in their job search and track their progress. In addition, the advisors will be responsible for tracking individual outcomes and state funds.

Centers, while reflecting community needs, will have some uniformity across the state. The statewide network of one-stop career centers will provide: a common applicant intake form, access to the information and job exchange network, accreditation and evaluation processes for service providers, eligibility standards for services for targeted groups, advisors, management of financial support, performance-based outcomes, and an evaluation process.

The Key:

A coordinated full-service facility meeting local needs and providing services to job seekers and employers.

Implementation Strategy:

March 1, 1996: Local planning and development phase for one-stop career centers completed

April 1, 1996: State applies for federal implementation funds for one-stop career centers

July 1, 1996: State begins implementation phase

July 1, 1999: One-stop centers are implemented statewide

❖ ***Recommendation 4*** ❖

Consolidate state programs that provide training and employment services and tie them to economic development

Through the integration process, we must encourage employer and employee input, and focus on personal choice and local needs.

Colorado must consolidate federal and state employment and training programs and align them with state and local economic development needs. The consolidation will reduce administrative costs, minimize duplication of services, and eliminate the public's confusion about where to get services. In addition, the variety of federally mandated performance goals and measures, which make an evaluation of the programs' combined effectiveness virtually impossible, will be replaced with common performance objectives and accountability standards. Through the integration process, we must encourage employer and employee input and focus on personal choice and local needs.

The Key:

A more efficient system with clear accountability standards.

Implementation Strategy:

August 1, 1995: Governor creates a cabinet council through executive order to direct consolidation of state employment and training programs.

January 1, 1996: Cabinet council reports to the Governor on consolidation plan.

February 1, 1996: Consolidation bill introduced in the General Assembly.

July 1, 1996: Implementation plan takes effect.

December 31, 1997: Implementation completed.

❖ *Recommendation 5* ❖

Assist in the creation of regional workforce development boards to oversee employment and training programs in designated geographical areas

In order to provide coordinated local oversight, regional boards will be created . . . to allow the greatest flexibility . . .

Colorado must assure that a structure exists at the local level to oversee a region's workforce development plans and programs. Currently, each employment and training program has a different oversight organization, which contributes to the fragmentation of services. In order to provide coordinated local oversight, regional boards will be created. Their composition will vary to allow the greatest flexibility and to promote participation by key entities in each area. These boards will take into account state planning regions, Service Delivery Areas, Job Service Centers, county social service offices, community colleges, school districts, and area vocational schools.

The Key:

Creating collaborative policy and oversight boards to meet local requirements.

Implementation Strategy

February 1, 1996: Workforce Coordinating Council recommends geographical areas for Workforce Development Boards based on information derived from the one-stop career center planning process, and in consultation with local elected officials.

July 1, 1996: Regional Workforce Development Boards are created (including recommendations for membership) through the Governor's executive order.

III. The Choice:
Colorado's Current Programs or a System for the Future

Nationally, there are more than 150 employment and training programs administered by 14 different federal agencies, providing $24 billion dollars (FY 94). Colorado offers more than 50 programs funded with over $121 million federal and state dollars. Throughout the state, counties, private non-profit agencies, and private for-profit providers administer these programs. However, federal guidelines dictate program eligibility, set fiscal requirements, and specify how programs are evaluated. Most of these programs were designed to meet the needs of targeted populations but were not designed to meet the needs of employers. The system we are recommending for the future will transform these individually administered programs into a coordinated, accessible system to meet Colorado's present and future needs. The major employment and training programs operating in Colorado and our contrasting vision for the future are outlined below. (For a more detailed listing, see Appendix B.)

Adult Basic Education Programs
Colorado Department of Education

- Any adult age 16 years or older is eligible to participate in one of the 143 basic education programs receiving funding from the Department of Education.
- These programs focus on life skills and basic academics and often have long waiting lists.

Adult/Youth Year Round Program
Governor's Job Training Office

- Once an individual is determined income-eligible to participate in the program, he/she undergoes a series of assessments to determine skill levels, aptitudes, and interests. However, this is not an entitlement program; therefore, enrollment often depends on the availability of funds. If basic skills training is required, it is provided before occupational training begins.

- A case manager is assigned to each participant for the duration of his/her enrollment in the program. The case manager not only provides counseling, training, referral, and supportive services, but is in constant contact with the participant during training, job placement, and follow-up.
- For training, the individual is referred to an activity such as in-house training or classroom training at a vocational school, community college, or proprietary school.
- Program evaluations are based on job placement and job retention.

Dislocated Worker Program
Governor's Job Training Office

- To be eligible, an individual must have been laid off from his/her job and not be likely to return to the same occupation elsewhere in the industry.
- Assessment is conducted to determine aptitudes and interests.
- Individuals may receive job search assistance, retraining, and placement services.
- Program effectiveness is evaluated by job placement and job retention.
- Rapid Response programs offer early intervention assistance for pending layoffs. The program mobilizes services of various agencies, including Job Service, Unemployment Insurance (UI), and Colorado AFL-CIO.
- Federal law requires that 50 percent of the funds Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) receive be spent on re-training.
- Funds are also provided to companies undergoing downsizing and mass layoffs.

Educational and Occupational Training Programs
Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System

- Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES) offers educational and vocational training to any Colorado high school student or adult interested in taking vocational education classes or enrolling in a community college.
- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) education coordination funds are administered by CCCOES to support a variety of programs including at-risk youth training, school-to-work transition, etc.

- CCCOES jointly administers, with the Office of Business Development, the Colorado FIRST and Existing Industries training programs to provide customized training to businesses seeking to relocate or expand in Colorado. Funds are used to train new employees, as well as to retrain current employees.
- Through a series of federal grants and local partnerships between community colleges and businesses, CCCOES provides workplace literacy programs, which are designed to improve the education levels of Colorado workers, particularly in basic skills such as math, English as a second language, reading, and writing.

Employment First (Food Stamp Employment and Training)
Department of Human Services

- Program participation is required as long as an individual remains on food stamps, is unemployed, and able-bodied.
- Funds are allocated based on the size of the population served and the previous year's local program performance. Depending upon fund availability, services are provided at county offices or participants are referred elsewhere.
- Job seeking skills training is a mandatory activity for all participants and requires successful completion of a job application, interview and job search plan. Throughout their participation, responsibility for finding employment is placed on the participant.
- Counselors work with individuals to analyze the job market and understand the transferability of skills. Resume-writing workshops and job counseling are also available.

Employment Services
Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

- Services are available to any job seeker or employer at 38 job service centers across the state run by the Employment Service (ES) Division. UI recipients are required to register at a job service center.
- Employers' job orders can be phoned or faxed. Job seekers must go into a Job Service Center to register, and registrations are taken by Employment Service employees.

- Interviewers taking job orders and registrations catalogue job requirements and job seekers' background information on the ES system. Information is largely catalogued in binary (numerical) form, and searches are not done by keywords.
- Searches are conducted by ES employees. A new search is performed every time a new job order is received. Searches are done using the DOCUMASTER system to search the database for applicants who match employers' job orders.

JOBS/New Directions
Colorado Department of Human Services

- The program is available for eligible AFDC recipients; however, the JOBS program is not an entitlement program, and funds are only available to counties on a limited basis. This program is currently available in 45 of Colorado's 63 counties.
- Each JOBS participant is assigned a case manager who works with the participant to develop an employability plan.
- Funds are available for training, supportive services, and job search assistance. Supportive services may include: child care; necessary work or training related items such as transportation, tools and equipment, clothing, eyeglasses, etc.; and tuition and fees for approved skills training programs. Transitional Medicaid and child care benefits (for individuals who become ineligible for AFDC due to increased employment earnings and have received AFDC for three of the last six months) are also available.
- JOBS programs are either minimal or complete. A minimal program includes: high school or equivalent education, and one optional component, either 1) community work experience, 2) work supplementation program, 3) on-the-job training, or 4) job search assistance which can be in individual or group settings. A complete program includes: educational activities, including high school or GED programs, adult basic education, or English as a second language; occupational training; job readiness (such as self-esteem building) and job development programs; placement assistance; and at least two of the above optional components.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Colorado Department of Human Services

- Any person with a physical or mental disability which is a vocational impediment to employment is eligible to participate in this program. An extensive assessment is conducted to determine eligibility.
- A vocational counselor helps each participant develop an Individual Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP). This plan details what must occur (training, counseling, rehabilitation, etc.) to ensure that the participant becomes employed upon completion of his/her plan. Depending upon financial need, the individual may be required to pay for either part or all of the services provided.

Workplace Education

Colorado Department of Education

- An employer may contact any of the 143 adult basic education programs for worksite training for its employees. This is a fee-for-service program.
- Skills assessment is provided from which a curriculum is developed to upgrade skills.
- In this customized approach, the curriculum focuses on basic reading, writing, math, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills necessary on the job.

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A System for the Future

To restructure the current programs, the Council is recommending a dynamic, coordinated, universally accessible system for the future. This new system will:

- provide one source of information for everyone in the state looking for a job, needing education, training, or simply wanting labor market or other information;
- be accessible and easy to use–customers can choose to bypass state employees and access the system on their own from a personal computer, library, or another location, or they can go to a one-stop career center for guided access to the system;
- provide employers and job seekers the option of cataloguing their own employment or hiring information and constructing their own job searches;
- provide employers with a comprehensive database of job seekers with their qualifications;
- have the capacity to meet the changing needs of the future;
- address customer needs instead of prescribed program goals since the funds will follow the individual;
- tie accountability for individual services to statewide goals;
- generate significant savings by reducing overhead and duplication of services; and
- respond to the changing economic development needs of regions and the state.

Based on countless conversations and meetings with small business owners, corporate executives, software consultants, and individuals who both currently use and decline to use the existing programs, the Council is confident that the new system will work well and serve its customers more efficiently. These pivotal improvements will translate into better service for more individuals and employers, which will ensure Colorado's economic vitality far into the twenty-first century.

IV. Elements of Colorado's Workforce Development System

During ten months of intensive education about the employment and training system, the Council recognized that the systemic changes we are recommending for Colorado cannot be accomplished without improving the basic elements of the service delivery system. Discussions revealed the startling lack of coordination among labor market information, assessment, training, placement, and follow-up and evaluation. These elements must be coordinated into an integrated service delivery model if we are to design a system through which all Colorado citizens and employers can receive the services and employment assistance they need. Furthermore, as we implement systemic change in Colorado, each of these elements must be redesigned while remaining compatible with the overall system goals.

Following are the changes necessary to develop a coordinated service delivery model to achieve the systemic changes we envision for Colorado.

Information

Accurate information is essential to ensure the efficiency of the entire workforce development system. Without accurate information, demand occupations or labor oversupplies cannot be tracked. Furthermore, jobs within broad occupational categories are constantly changing, yet the statistics fail to keep pace with the marketplace. The jobs of the future will be determined by skills, not occupational titles–but labor market statistics primarily reflect older concepts, classifying jobs by category rather than by skill requirements. For example, biochemists are classified under manufacturing jobs in current data.

It is equally important that the information is understandable and available to the users (e.g., employers, high school counselors, one-stop career center personnel, and career advisors) so they and their clients understand the dynamics of local, state, and global markets and are aware of their options.

To ensure that the information is most effectively utilized, Colorado must

- collect skills-based data instead of obsolete categorical data;
- develop accurate information which includes forecasting and trends, as well as demographic data;
- translate and disseminate data to the local level;
- make all the information available via Colorado's information and job exchange network; and
- allocate more staff development funds for high school counselors, one-stop career center personnel, advisors, case managers, and other primary users of the information so they understand and can explain it.

Assessment

Colorado must focus on developing workers with the requisite skills to perform well, both today and in the future. However, specific skills will become increasingly less important in the emerging global economy, as marketplaces and technology rapidly evolve. Assessments must be uniform, based on skills and marketplaces. Furthermore, assessments must be employer-credible since employers know what skills are most important for job success, and have some idea of what the changing workplace will demand in the future.

Without reliable assessments, it would be difficult to verify a job seeker's abilities and to recommend services. Assessment is a process step–depending on the assessment results, individuals will be referred to the most appropriate services for their unique needs to be met. For example, individuals demonstrating a lack of basic education or workplace competency skills should receive basic skills training, eventually leading to occupational training and job placement. Individuals initially demonstrating adequate employability skills should be tested to determine interests, occupational skills, and skill deficiencies, and be referred to the appropriate occupational training program.

To develop highly effective, unbiased assessments, Colorado must

- adopt one battery of assessment tests to be used uniformly, at one-stop career centers and elsewhere;

- certify that the assessment tests are culturally unbiased indicators of aptitude;
- update the assessments regularly to reflect the changing skills demanded by the workplace;
- ensure that job seekers' skill profiles are reported in the same format as skill requirements in job profiles;
- include qualitative measures (e.g., personal interviews) and other assessment tools in the battery since work ethic and other basic workplace competencies cannot be measured by standardized tests;
- make assessment centers independent of training providers, where geographically and programmatically feasible; and
- promote employer ownership of the system.

Training

Today's world demands a system that promotes life-long learning to accommodate the need for workers to continually upgrade their skills. Because jobs are changing so quickly, Coloradans must have access to state-of-the-art training to remain competitive. Training must develop workers who will succeed in the rapidly changing workplace. It must also focus on problem-solving, dispute resolution, and decision-making skills so workers can remain flexible. Without such training, the gap between the top brackets and lowest brackets of workers will continue to widen.

Because high equipment costs and specialized expertise often affect task-oriented training, some programs should only be provided at select locations which demonstrate capacity. Programs which require less highly technical equipment can be provided at many locations throughout the state. And whenever possible, to save costs and insure that up-to-date equipment is used, educational entities should work with businesses to offer training in the workplace. The keys are for the training and the equipment to be state-of-the-art, and for the programs to simulate on-the-job experience.

Employer-focused programs–such as Colorado FIRST and Existing Industries–are also important because they enable businesses to be proactive with training. This industry-specific training will become more and more important as technology rapidly evolves and as workplaces incorporate more employee decision-making and teamwork into their routines to remain competitive. Both employees and employers are well-served by such customized training.

To develop a training system with high-quality programs to assist everyone, Colorado must

- build the training system so all Coloradans, regardless of background or needs, can use the system as needed throughout their working lives;
- align every training program with the overall system goal of preparing individuals for a good job in demand occupations, whether the program focuses on employability skills training or occupational training;
- ensure that public and private accredited training programs are listed in Colorado's information and job exchange network;
- enact workplace literacy legislation;
- expand employer-focused programs so businesses are encouraged to invest in the workforce;
- develop open-entry/open-exit, and fast-track programs; and
- engage employers in the public system so they readily provide vital input about what skills will be necessary in the future as technology and jobs rapidly change

Placement

For most individuals, placement is the key element of the system because it represents everyone's ultimate goal of finding a job. However, placement does not guarantee success unless the individual has acquired the right skills and work ethic. Furthermore, it must meet the needs of the business community. Without employers' confidence in the system, there will be fewer vacancies listed for job seekers to pursue, and fewer employers hiring from the network.

To carefully design an effective placement system, Colorado must

- determine strategies to ensure employers' confidence in the quality of the system;
- encourage employers to list *all* their job openings in the Colorado's information and job exchange network;
- update the network software routinely so employers can most effectively narrow their searches to meet their specific hiring criteria;
- report job requirements in the same format as employee skills obtained through the assessment process so matches are easily facilitated; and

- provide incentives for individuals who are not job-ready to be referred back to the system for the appropriate training or education, provide similar incentives to individuals who need additional instruction or training to meet specific job order requirements.

Follow-up and Evaluation

The service delivery system has not completely met its responsibilities once an individual begins a job. Follow-up and evaluation are critical functions to ensure that the entire system is effective, and to provide relevant data to keep labor market and other information current.

Follow-up must be tailored to measure common outcomes. For example, whether the individual entered the system training-ready or not, a displaced worker or not, the outcomes must be uniform and measurable, tied to overall system goals.

To ensure the most reliable follow-up and evaluation, Colorado must

- focus evaluations on more than placement outcomes–evaluations must be tied to the initial assessment and the individual's personal goals;
- include employers' evaluations in follow-up data, including the ease and accessibility of using the public system to fill job vacancies; and
- include customer service satisfaction data.

These elements must be coordinated into a system which is available to *everyone* through Colorado's information and job search network, offering a broad range of services including job referrals, resume writing tutorials, and information about education and training programs. Everyone will be able to access all the information from a variety of locations without the help of state employees. Individuals requiring more intensive services can go to an advisor/facilitator at a one-stop career center, community college, or elsewhere. Advisors will provide guidance through the network and career counseling as the needs of the individuals dictate. In addition, personnel will track state funds and fulfill the system's accountability requirements. All customers will have the support they need to make good choices.

Because one size does not fit all in Colorado, these elements will comprise an open-access system which allows each individual to chart his/her own path of services, rather than forcing compliance with rigid program, funding, and eligibility criteria. Specific program requirements will be obsolete in such a coordinated system as funds are targeted to *individuals*. For example, a displaced aerospace engineer and an unemployed high school drop-out share the goal of meaningful employment–yet the support they need and the paths they will follow to reach that goal will be very different. The key is for the system to provide uniform information via a variety of paths so individuals may choose the most appropriate combination of services to attain their employment goals.

For example:

- The unemployed high school drop-out with few skills and little or no work experience, might begin with assessment. Based on the assessment, the individual will be referred for basic education and employability skills training, as well as other basic services necessary to become training-ready. At this first stage, the goal is for the individual to be ready to work, i.e., that he/she has met basic skills requirements and understands the work ethic. Once training-ready, the individual will receive vocational counseling and continue to the next stage for job-specific training. These programs will provide occupational training, placement services, and monitor post-program progress. The goal at the second stage is to ensure that the individual is well-trained and finds a good job. Throughout this process, an advisor will chart the individual's progress through the system.

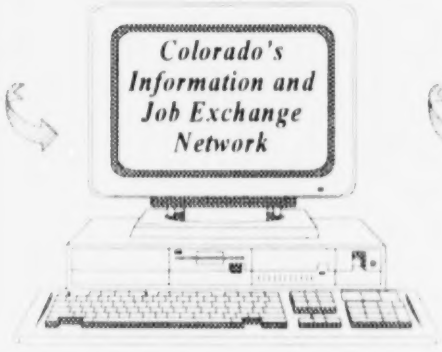
- Another path–appropriate for the displaced engineer, as well as other work-ready individuals–will also begin with assessment. However, these individuals will directly move to the second stage (unless they request vocational counseling or other services) for occupational training and placement.

- A basic path will be available for everyone, especially those employers and individuals who feel disenfranchised by the current system. Colorado's information and job search network will be universally available from numerous sites, including personal computers, libraries, and high schools. Individuals can: 1) search for job openings, 2) find information about labor markets, training programs, and occupational descriptions, and 3) electronically apply for jobs through the network. Employers will be encouraged to post job openings through the network, and they can electronically sort through the applications received by whatever criteria they choose.

Recommended Workforce Development System

Employers list job openings

Individuals seek employment and training information



Where Information is Accessed

- ❑ Home Computers
- ❑ Libraries
- ❑ 4-Year Colleges
- ❑ Non-Profits
- ❑ Community Colleges

❑ **One-Stop Career Centers**

Who Can Use the System?

- ❑ Unemployment Insurance Recipients
- ❑ Community College Students
- ❑ High School Students
- ❑ University Workers
- ❑ Dislocated Workers
- ❑ Economically Disadvantaged
- ❑ Underemployed
- ❑ Anyone seeking information or a job
- ❑ Employers

One-Stop Services

- ❑ Eligibility Determination
- ❑ Needs Assessment
- ❑ Skills Assessment
- ❑ Job Placement
- ❑ Vocational Counseling
- ❑ Basic Skills Training
- ❑ Employability Skills Training
- ❑ Occupational Skills Training Referrals

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V. Conclusion

" We must . . . ensure that our current workers are given the opportunity to upgrade their skills, so that they are not permanently dislocated when changes alter the scope of their jobs. "

Governor Roy Romer

The world of work has created new demands on workers which Colorado's employment and training programs failed to address. Despite dedicated state employees who have worked to help their clients, the current programs have not met the needs of many Coloradans. By implementing the five recommendations contained in this report, Colorado can create an integrated workforce development system that will serve everyone. This new delivery system will be:

- market-driven, based on employer needs and continually accurate labor market information (LMI);
- efficient, flexible, and accessible, maximizing customer choice;
- performance-based, with outcomes tied to accountability measures;
- aligned with the economic development needs of the state; and
- a catalyst to encourage life-long learning investments for all Coloradans.

As we work to preserve what makes Colorado so unique and to enhance our economic competitiveness and well-being, we must ensure that these efforts develop a quality workforce. As Governor Romer stated in his January 1995 *Strategic Agenda for Colorado*, "If we want the best jobs we create through our economic development efforts to go to Coloradans, we must have good institutions of higher learning and good school-to-work transition programs. But we must also ensure that our current workers are given the opportunity to upgrade their skills, so that they are not permanently dislocated when changes alter the scope of their jobs."

This report recommends a progressive approach to address the challenges posed by the Governor in his strategic agenda and those identified by the Workforce Coordinating Council over the past year. If we meet these challenges, Colorado will develop a workforce prepared to enter the twenty-first century and one which will assure the state's continued economic strength and competitiveness.

APPENDIX A

The Colorado Legislature, in HB 94-1191, asked the Workforce Council to develop a strategic plan which provides information about the state's training needs, including the need for apprenticeship programs.

The Workforce Coordinating Council believes that students are not being prepared adequately for the world of work. But we believe that the answer does not lie in creating a few apprenticeship programs. The answer is to have systemic reform in our educational system so that students--whether they are going to college or not--are exposed to the world of work through school-based learning, work-based learning, and activities that connect schools and businesses. We support the conclusions reached in the School-to-Work Initiative and hope to play a crucial role in the implementation process.

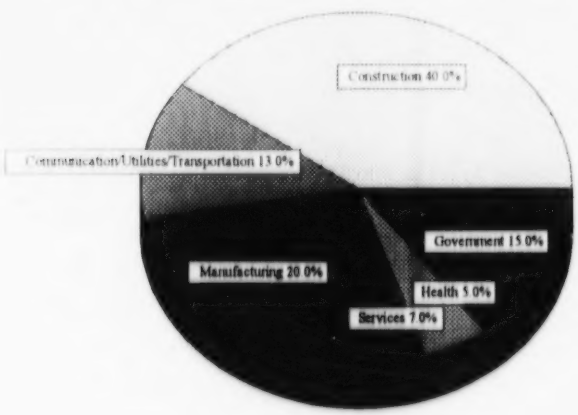
We strongly believe that businesses must participate in the educational process, by helping schools develop curriculum, providing internships, mentors, and job-shadowing experiences for kids. Only through comprehensive and systematic involvement of businesses in the educational process, will our students be able to bridge the gap with students in other industrialized countries.

In researching the availability of registered apprenticeships in Colorado, we obtained the following information from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeships, the registration agency for all apprenticeship programs in the State of Colorado.

The Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training provides technical assistance to all industries (construction, manufacturing, serving, transportation, utilities, etc.) seeking a formalized, structured, nationally-recognized apprenticeship program.

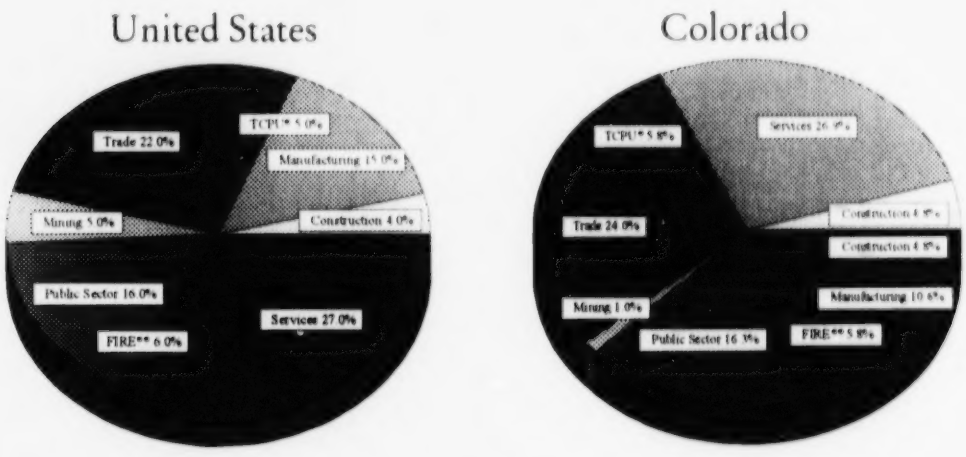
At the end of 1994, there were 279 registered apprenticeship programs with 1,117 employers participating in those programs. The 279 registered apprenticeship programs are found in the following industries.

Apprenticeship Program by Industry



At the end of 1994, there were 2,706 apprentices registered in the above programs. Of those, 8 percent were female, 29 percent were minority, and 22 percent were veterans.

Employment Breakdown by Industry - 1994



* Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities ** Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
Source: Colorado Economic Perspective, Office of State Planning and Budgeting

APPENDIX B

Workforce Development Programs Authorized by Federal Statute Fiscal Year 1994			
Federal Act and Appropriations	***Program***	***Number Served***	***Funding*** *(See Note)*
Carl Perkins Vocational & Technical Education Act $13,983,969	Gender Equity Programs	10,000	$335,000
	Programs for Single Parents, Displaced Homemakers, and Single Pregnant Women	10,000	$837,500
	Program to Support Community-Based Organizations	2,000	$150,000
	Consumer and Homemaking Education Programs	2,000	$419,300
	Tech-Prep Education	3,750	$1,333,000
Job Training Partnership Act $36,568,202	Summer Youth Program	4,751	$7,979,731
	Year-Round Program for Youth and Adults	Youths - 4,512 Adults - 7,063	Youth - $6,235,440 Adult - $10,121,453
	Older Worker Program	450	$506,073
	Dislocated Worker Program	4,811	$7,164,522
	Special Projects for Dislocated Workers	3,012	$7,367,056
Wagner-Peyser Act $10,060190	Job Referrals	137,993 individuals 412,512 referrals	Varies
	Vocational Guidance	18,940	Varies
	Year-Round Youth Services	24,867	Varies
	Job Search Workshops	9,427	Varies
	Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers	1,387	Varies
	Federal Bonding	200	Varies
	Governor's Summer Job Hunt	12,860 served 8,860 placements	$380,000

Note: Funding includes federal appropriations plus any state or local matching funds.

Workforce Development Programs Authorized by Federal Statute Fiscal Year 1994			
Federal Act and Appropriations	***Program***	***Number Served***	***Funding (See Note)***
	Ex-Offenders	3,273	$25,000
Wagner-Peyser Act *(continued)*	Dislocated Workers	3,585	$100,000
	Forty Plus	136	$54,000
	Veteran's Employment Service	46,803	$2,970,000
Part F, Title IV, Social Security Act $9,055,549	JOBS/New Directions	6,103 average montly caseload	$14,215,508
Food Stamp Employment Act $2,357,114	Employment First	4,652 average monthly caseload	$3,449,298
Adult Education Act $2,402,950	Adult-Based Education	13,500	$1,778,185
	Colorado Refugee English	800	$ 244,430
	Colorado Literacy Action	1,500	$ 35,000
	GED Testing Program	10,555	$ 63,000
National Community Service Trust Act $1,990,540	AmeriCorps USA	102	$1,331,516
	Learn and Serve America	4,235	$ 659,270

Note: Funding includes federal appropriations plus any state or local matching funds.

Additional Workplace Development Programs Operating in Colorado - Fiscal Year 1994			
Program	***Purpose***	***Number Served***	***Funding***
Colorado FIRST	Job training	50	$1,982,400*
Existing Industries	Retraining	19	$346,920*
Colorado Vocational Act	Vocational education	60,000	$15,142,766*
Area Vocational Postsecondary Programs	Vocational schools	17,000	$10,614,199*
Veteran's Employment Service	Educational grants and on-the-job training	46,803	$1,456,000**
Trade Adjustment Assistance	Re-employment services	280	$575,000**
NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance Program	Re-employment services	22	$323,250**
Service Member Occupational Training and Conversion Act	On-the-job training	1,206	$1,586,800**
Corrections Academic Education	Basic education for inmates	3,783	$3,130,092*
Corrections Vocational Education	Vocational education for inmates	2,370	$2,867,137*
Life Skills Grant	Life skills education for inmates	120	$240,000**
National Senior Service Corps	Community service	9,016	$1,705,015**
Higher Education Service Learning Grants	Community service	100+	$349,406**
Displaced Homemakers	Job transition	800-1,000/yr	$100,000*
Colorado School for the Deaf & Blind	Vocational education	149	$21,000*
Sheltered Workshops	Job training		$5,737,021♦
Vocational Rehabilitation	Employment assistance		$28,971,998▫

Legend: * General Fund ** Federal ♦ Federal/General Fund/Local Mix
▫ Federal/General Fund Mix

ENDNOTES

1 Corporation for Enterprise Development (Washington, DC: May 1995). See also: Colorado Legislative Council. Focus Colorado: Economic & Revenue Forecast, 1995-2000. (Denver, CO: March 1995).

2 Several counties have suffered steadily high unemployment rates in the last four years of Colorado's boom; nineteen counties still have per capita incomes which are 80 percent of the national average or lower. Over 375,000 Coloradans throughout the state live below the poverty level.

3 Colorado Trust. Choices for the Future. (Denver, CO.: 1994). The Denver Post recently reported: "At the bottom end of the scale, the lowest-earning 20 percent of Americans earn only 5.7 percent of all the after-tax income paid to individuals. The top 20 percent of American households in terms of income–$55,000 or more–have 55 percent of all after-tax income." (The Denver Post, April 17, 1995). Nationwide, since 1969, the incomes of the top 30 percent of Americans increased while those of the remaining 70 percent declined. See also: National Center on Education and the Economy. America's Choice: high skills or low wages!

4 Vocational Education Weekly, Vol. VIII, No. 1, April 3, 1995.

5 Bridges, William. Job Shift, p. 5.

6 "Raising minimum wage isn't the correct answer." The Denver Post, March 26, 1995. National Center on Education and the Economy. See also: National Association of Manufacturers. Workforce Readiness Report. (Washington, DC: 1993). The higher paying jobs of the twenty-first century will require education and training which many of the current workforce, including the underemployed and unemployed, do not currently possess.

7 National Center on Education and the Economy. America's Choice: high skills or low wages!, p. 1.

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